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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION KUWAIT, MAY 8-10: ABU GHRAIB; IRAQ

1. SUMMARY: Kuwaiti commentators continued strident criticism and outrage at revelations of the abuse at Abu Ghraib. A prominent conservative commentator notes with satisfaction that the abuse scandal has resulted in the "postponement until further notice" of the issuance of the State Department Report on Human Rights Practices. Some writers continue to recognize the transparency and dispatch with which U.S. authorities are dealing with the revelations of abuse: Abdullah Khalaf wrote in independent Al-Watan (5/10), "In comparison with Arab prisons, where prisoners are incarcerated and never heard of again, at least in this case the story, when it first appeared, appeared through American sources." END SUMMARY.

2. "In The Footsteps Of Saddam Hussein"
Dr. Abdul Muhsin Jamal wrote in independent Al-Qabas (5/8): "It is ironic that the emergence of the prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq coincides with the issuance of the State Department's Annual Country Report on Human Rights Practices. However, since the credibility of the United States after the Abu Ghraib allegations is currently at its lowest, the issuance of the report has been postponed until further notice. The abuse committed was deliberate and sanctioned by military intelligence. All Arabs, whether represented by governments, peoples, or human rights committees, must move fast to release Iraqi prisoners and replace American guards with Iraqi ones. Our hearts go out to the Iraqi people, who were first brutalized by Saddam's regime with the full support of powerful states, and are now brutalized by the occupation."

3. "Damn This Sort Of Thinking"
Ahmad Al-Sarraf wrote in independent Al-Qabas (5/9): "No army around the world can guarantee how their troops will behave at all times and in all places. The same goes for the American [military] command, but they can be blamed for any shortcomings and they can impose punishment. To close an eye to such practices would be unforgivable. It is the right sort of democracy that exposed the abuse in Iraq, and it is precisely such democracy that can remedy the fallout and attempt to prevent it from happening again. That is how nations learn and develop."

4. "From Abu Ghraib ... With Love"
Mohammed Al-Qatma wrote in independent Al-Qabas (5/10): "Leaked pictures depicting abuse of Iraqi prisoners deserve the following observations: 1) these pictures prove that American occupying forces are no different from any other occupying forces; 2) the crime is not in the pictures, but in the occupation of Iraq and the extent of hatred toward the Iraqis; 3) the pictures exposed similar practices perpetrated by Israelis against Palestinians; 4) George Bush's team feels hatred laced with Judeo-Christian contempt toward Arabs; 5) the abuse scandal broke out at a time when Washington was insisting we clean up house and start reforms; 6) the pictures depicting torture and abuse will constitute a new era of hatred towards the Americans in general; 7) the failure of the American policy in Iraq reached new heights, especially when the military command decided to cooperate again with members of the former Baath regime."

5. "Torture Is Back"
Abdullah Khalaf wrote in independent Al-Watan (5/10): "American and coalition forces are facing grave dangers in Iraq, but the situation will become even more dangerous after news and pictures of abused Iraqi detainees were leaked. Despite world condemnation, this issue will be resolved eventually by investigations, human rights organizations and the law. In comparison with Arab prisons, where prisoners are incarcerated and never heard of again, at least in this case the story, when it first appeared, appeared through American sources."

6. "The Chicago Sermon"
Adel Al-Qassar wrote in independent Al-Qabas (5/9): "In light of the inhumane acts committed by American soldiers against Iraqi detainees, many Islamic organizations in the United States called for the resignation of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Naturally, the American people

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were shocked by such incidents, whereas the Arab American community dealt with the issue in a realistic and balanced manner. The incident seemed like a test for both parties. When the 9/11 incident occurred, Muslims all around the world beseeched the world not to blame the rest for the mistakes of a few. And now, when a small group of American soldiers commit heinous crimes against Iraqi prisoners, the American public opinion is calling for the case to be resolved quickly."

17. "An Apology?? An Overthrow Of American Foreign Policy Is Needed"

Faisal Al-Zamel wrote in independent Al-Anba (5/10): "The efforts of the American administration to ensure security [in Iraq] have failed. Rather, they have led to spreading hatred and resulted in killing Americans. Also, with the high rise of oil prices, Washington looks like it is heading toward ruin. Good intentions are not enough to justify these large numbers of mistakes. If spreading democracy will end up with events similar to the Iraqi prisons incidents, then the amount of frustration toward all this is unimaginable."

18. "Muqtada: Symbol of Sacrifice"

Dr. Sami Naser Khalifa wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-A'am (5/8): "Muqtada Al-Sadr's mistake was that he undertook peaceful resistance in order to attain a sincere national demand, which is to free Iraq from foreign occupation. By his transparent, ideological and nationalist political rhetoric, Al-Sadr has become very close to Iraqis in particular and to the wider Arab and Islamic world in general. By turning to Iraqis and asking them to continue with their peaceful resistance, he proved the extent of the enemy's stupidity. He exposed the ugly face of the occupation, and dedicated country-wide national rejection for the occupation, at whatever cost. He explained that the misery of the Iraqis was due to the occupation's greed for Iraq's wealthy resources. What makes Al-Sadr a symbol of sacrifice, is that he said 'NO' to the occupiers when all other former opposition figures failed."

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